

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LYON 00050 071623Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /085 W
-----005942 072142Z /64

R 071535Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL LYON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1111
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS LYON 0050

E.O. 11652 :N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT : THE FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS : FINAL
VIEWS BEFORE THE FIRST TOUR.

SUMMARY :
----- IN THE LYON CONSULAR DISTRICT, AS PROBABLY
IN THE OTHERS, THE ELECTORAL CALDRON IS REACHING
THE BOILING POINT. IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS PRECEEDING
NEXT SUNDAY'S FIRST TOUR, DECLARATIONS, INTERVIEWS,
PROGNOSTICATIONS AND DEBATES HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING
EACH OTHER WITH EVER INCREASING FREQUENCY, TO THE
POINT WHERE MANY FRENCHMEN ARE BEGINNING TO
CONSIDER LE MAL FRANCAIS TO BE MORE AN OVERDOSE
OF POLITICS THAN ANYTHING ELSE. THE LAST MINUTE
OUTLOOK HERE IS FOR SOME GAINS BY THE LEFT BUT NO
BIG SWEEP. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN THIS REGION AS ELSEWHERE, THE NUMBERS OF CANDI-
DACIES HAVE MULTIPLIED AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT 80 0/0
OF THEM WILL BE QUICKLY ELIMINATED IN THE FIRST TOUR SINCE
THEY WILL NOT DRAW THE REQUIRED 12,5 0/0 OF VOTES
FROM TOTAL DISTRICT VOTING REGISTRATIONS. THEREFORE
ONLY THOSE REPRESENTING THE LEADING PARTIES OR HAVING
NATIONAL STATURE WILL QUALIFY FOR THE SECOND TOUR.

THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THE KEY TO THE OURCOME LIES IN WHETHER THERE WILL STILL BE SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT TO COOPERATE HAMMERED OUT BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS DURING THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE TWO TOURS. THE SENTIMENT IN LYON AND OTHER PRINCIPAL CITIES IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT IS THAT EVEN IF A PROFORMA AGREEMENT WERE TO BE ANNOUNCED AT THE LAST MOMENT, THE KIND OF VOTING DISCIPLINE AND LOYALTY REQUIRED TO PUT THE LEFT OVER THE TOP IN THE SECOND TOUR WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED. THE FEELING HERE PERSISTS THAT GIVEN THE CURRENT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK AND EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, THE COMMUNISTS REALLY DO NOT WISH TO GOVERN IN A COMMON PROGRAM OF THE LEFT AT THIS TIME. THE FEAR OF MANY IN THIS AREA INCLUDING MODERATES AND EVEN SOME SOCIALISTS IS THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE DANGEROUS AND UNLESS PROFOUND CHANGES CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT IN FRENCH SOCIETY AND ATTITUDES, TIME WILL BE WORKING FOR THE COMMUNISTS IN THE LONG RUN.

2. LEADERS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE ENTREPRISES ARE AMONGST THOSE MOST CONCERNED. THE TYPICAL VIEW FROM THIS SECTOR IS THAT POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE LEFT AS WELL AS ON THE RIGHT HAVE BEEN TOTALLY UNREALISTIC IN THEIR PRESENTATION OF FRENCH IDEALS AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN TERMS OF ACTUAL PROSPECTS AND REALISTIC UNCLASSIFIED

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POSSIBILITIES. THE RESTRAINTS PLACED ON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ARE ALREADY ENORMOUS. MANY HAVE SUFFERED EXTENSIVE LOSSES DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS OF ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN. IF THE MINIMUM WAGE WERE TO BE SUDDENLY INCREASED OR OTHER SOCIAL CHARGES ADDED TO THE ALREADY HEAVY LOAD, MANY SMALLER OR MEDIUM FIRMS WILL JUST HAVE TO CLOSE RESULTING IN FEWER JOBS AND INCREASED SOCIAL UNREST.

3. IN THE SIX WEEKS SINCE POST'S PREVIOUS REPORT ON ELECTION ISSUES AND OUTLOOK, LYON 0017, THERE HAS BEEN A SHIFT IN EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING ELECTION RESULTS. WHEREAS THEN THE OUTLOOK WAS FOR SUBSTANTIAL GAINS BY THE LEFT THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT, PRESENT PROJECTIONS ARE FOR SOME LEFTIST GAINS BUT NO BIG SWEEP. VERSCHUUR

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